



ASIA/HONG KONG - Cardinal Tong: the resumption of dialogue between mainland China and the Holy See is a "great hope"

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - Cardinal Fernando Filoni's recent proposal of establishing a high level Commission between mainland China and the Holy See to deal with unresolved issues that affect the lives of Chinese Catholics is "a great hope for the future." Cardinal John Tong, Bishop of Hong Kong is convinced. The Chinese Cardinal, who spent the last few weeks in Rome as President delegate of the Synod of Bishops on the new evangelization, tells Fides Agency to pray that the Chinese authorities - on the eve of a crucial Communist Party Congress - seize as a "friendly gesture" the importance of the considerations set out by the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization in a recent article written for Tripod, the quarterly Catholic linked to Hong Kong diocese.

In that article, Cardinal Filoni considered the events of Chinese Catholicism five years from the letter addressed by Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholics of China in 2007, suggesting among other things, a search for "a new way of dialogue" between the Holy See and the government of Beijing, citing in this regard the bilateral Commissions between mainland China and Taiwan and that established between the Holy See and Vietnam.

Also according to Cardinal Tong "dialogue is necessary, because without it one cannot attempt to solve any of the problems still open, and through dialogue misunderstandings and misconceptions can fall." The Bishop of Hong Kong gives as an example the case of illegitimate episcopal ordinations imposed on the Church in China: "Our turmoil concerning these events," explains the Cardinal to Fides, "arises from the fact that these ordinations hurt the Church in an essential point of her own nature. With dialogue one can make due to the fact that the Bishops are not officials of a political apparatus. Also to become priests one must have the appropriate doctrinal, moral, pastoral and human requirements. And this is even more true for the selection of Bishops. "

According to Cardinal Tong, the article written by the Prefect of the missionary Congregation of the Holy See outlines with persuasive force the positive effects that the freedom of faith and belonging to the Catholic Church can also project on the ground of civil coexistence, "there is a potential consonance " notes the Bishop of Hong Kong" between being a good Catholic and being a good citizen. Our old traditions based on Confucian thought push the individual to correct themselves to live in harmony and in respect towards one's own family, society and the entire world. Now, the following of Jesus produces precisely these effects, freeing us from selfishness and materialism and leading us to love our neighbor. Even the government could recognize and appreciate this: if the Church is given to allow her faithful to grow in freedom, so that they can be really good Catholics, even society benefits. "

Cardinal Tong also agrees on the desirability of new instruments of dialogue prefigured by Cardinal Filoni in his article for Tripod: " High-level bilateral commissions" recalls the Bishop of Hong Kong "already exist between mainland China and Taiwan, as well as between Vietnam and Holy See. They confirm that one could create a similar tool of contact between the Holy See and mainland China." (GV) (Agenzia Fides 29/10/2012)